The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Well, Mr. President, the Trump Presidency is just a disaster, and more and more people know it. Just about everyone is getting to know it now.

This morning's CNN poll—right over my shoulder—is further confirmation that Trump has completely lost the trust of the American people.

Americans can see it, smell it, feel it: Trump's priorities are completely out of whack. He is concerned not with average citizens and making their lives better, just his own ego.

Just look at some of these numbers: More than three in every four Americans say that Trump's disastrous war on Iran hasn't been worth the cost. The same numbers say they have experienced hardship because of gas prices: 79 percent.

And when asked: Does Trump have the right priorities? Seventy-three percent say no. A record 73 percent of Americans think Trump hasn't focused enough on the most pressing issues they face.

Pick any poll. Pick any issue. You will come to the same conclusion: Trump is totally out of touch. He is hurting America and not listening to America.

No one likes what you are doing. Are you listening, Donald? No one likes what you are doing.

Look at those numbers. They should make Donald Trump hang his head in shame: 72 percent disapprove of how he is conducting the war in Iran; 79 percent disapprove of him on gas prices; 73 percent say you have the wrong priorities for them.

When the overwhelming majority of Americans say you are taking the country in the wrong direction, you better change course.

Trump and his party can either take the hint or take a hike when it comes in November.

Democrats have been clear on appropriations. Democrats have been clear from the start: We want to fund the government, avoid a shutdown, pass strong appropriations bills that improve people's lives. Bipartisan negotiations are ongoing, and Senate Democrats are working in good faith to reach an agreement to keep the appropriations process moving forward.

We are fighting for a bipartisan funding package—not partisan bills that bankroll Donald Trump's war agenda while leaving working families behind. Any CR must be bipartisan. We must keep the government open without abandoning the needs of working families or giving Donald Trump a blank check for his destructive agenda.

There is a responsible path forward. Senate Democrats are ready to take it. Republicans must meet us to get that done.

MEDICARE

Mr. President, Trump's crusade against Americans' healthcare costs continues every single day. Listen to this: Yesterday, Trump doubled prescription drug costs for millions of seniors by making cuts to Medicare drug plans. Just 2 days before Medicare's 61st anniversary, no less, he is cutting the dollars we need and doubling prescription drug costs for millions of seniors.

Can Trump get any more heartless? We are talking about seniors splitting pills in half to ration life-saving drugs or skipping meals to afford their medication at the pharmacy counter. That is despicable.

This is just the latest salvo in Trump's war on Americans' healthcare.

A year ago, Trump ransacked over a trillion dollars from the healthcare system to bankroll tax giveaways to the wealthiest Americans and corporations.

And since then, millions of people have lost their coverage altogether while tens of millions get slammed while premiums double, triple, even quadruple.

But I guess that wasn't enough for Donald. Now he is coming after seniors—millions of them—by raising their prescription drug costs.

In Trump's America, families are fighting for their lives while the rich get richer.

IRAN

Mr. President, Trump is more concerned about protecting himself from the repercussions of his failed war in Iran than protecting our troops who are in the line of fire.

As Trump twiddles his thumbs without any plan for how to end his reckless misadventure, our servicemembers are facing down barrage after barrage of Iranian missiles and drones.

Donald, posting another lie on Truth Social won't stop the missiles from flying. Thumping your chest won't bring down the crushing gas prices you have sent skyrocketing. And brushing casualties under the rug doesn't get our men and women in uniform out of harm's way.

And those whose names were eliminated, before they put them back, do not come back to life when you just simply take their name off the roll.

There is only one way to do that—to do all of that—bring our troops home. End the war. Democrats will soon force another vote on our War Powers Resolution to end this aimless war and bring our troops back home to their families.

Every second Trump prolongs this war, our servicemembers' lives are at risk.

Senate Republicans, stand up for troops, not the President who sent them to war without a plan, without a mission, without an exit strategy. Senate Republicans, stand up with the American people and come join us in ending this war.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, let us stand in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:30 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. SCHMITT).

SUPPORTING EARLY-CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS' DEDUCTIONS ACT—Motion to Proceed—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

DIGITAL ASSET MARKET CLARITY ACT

Ms. LUMMIS. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the Digital Asset Market Clarity Act, also known as the CLARITY Act, and about the years of work that brought us to this moment.

Now, I only have a few minutes to get started, but I am just getting wound up. I am going to talk for a little while. Then I am going to be back tomorrow, and I am going to talk about this some more because I have got a lot of pent-up things to say.

First of all, this is a very good bill—good for the country, good for consumers, and good for the people we all represent on both sides of this aisle. So, after 11 months of giving nearly everything that was asked of us, I am genuinely struggling to understand what else my colleagues across the aisle think it needs before we act.

When I was elected to the Senate in 2020, I knew I wanted to work on digital asset legislation because Wyoming's legislature was already years ahead of Washington. It was building a legal framework for digital asset companies before most of the country was even paying attention. I wanted to do everything I could to keep those companies in Wyoming and, more importantly, to keep them in America.

The person I have been most proud to work with is Democrat Senator KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND of New York. People have raised an eyebrow for years that a Wyoming Republican and a New York Democrat have worked hand in hand on this bill, but we have become genuine friends, and I trust her.

In June 2022, we introduced the Lummis-Gillibrand Responsible Financial Innovation Act together—the first real attempt at a comprehensive regulatory framework for digital assets, dividing oversight between the SEC and the CFTC and regulating stablecoins. That was a 168-page bill. We had to start by deciding whether to create a unique, new, stand-alone regulatory framework or lay digital assets over the existing framework. We chose the latter, and then we took off from there.

We reintroduced Lummis-Gillibrand in 2023. That was a 274-page bill. It contained provisions that cracked down on mixers and tumblers and crypto ATMs. It required plain-language customer agreements and regulated crypto advertising. It was a very strong bill for consumers. From a consumer protection standpoint, it had improved dramatically.

That partnership is now the foundation this bill stands on, and it is why I reject any suggestion that this bill is partisan. This bill is bipartisan. It has always been about keeping an industry we want here—here to stay—but regulated in the right way.

In Wyoming, we used to call it ''growth on our terms.'' This bill is growth on our terms. It is growth on American terms—protecting consumers and protecting us from illicit finance.

Today, we have a 616-page bill because I have listened to my Republican and Democrat friends, incorporated their priorities, and tried to create the best bill possible. That is how we got to a 15-to-9 bipartisan vote out of the Banking Committee in May.

Now, plenty of people have told me to try to move this through on Republican votes alone and skip the headache. I have rejected that every time because the only way to get a bill through Congress that actually lasts is to build it together. We have earned support not only from every corner of the digital asset industry, but we have earned the support of major cornerstones in our financial industry, like Goldman Sachs and Fidelity.

Just this past Friday, the National Fraternal Order of Police endorsed this bill—an organization that spent months telling us this legislation would tie the hands of law enforcement investigating crypto crime. We listened and worked to secure dozens of illicit finance and anti-money laundering provisions that give law enforcement the tools they need, and they can hold bad actors accountable now. When they saw that, they came around. That is what good-faith negotiations produce.

Before any one of my Democratic colleagues tells me this bill doesn't do enough, I want to show each of you what 11 months of negotiations produce—provision after provision. I want the record to show precisely what was asked for and what we delivered.

Title I alone reflects 33 separate Democrat-driven edits, including tightening the bill's core definitions so companies can't structure their way around Federal securities laws; building a mandatory SEC ''front door'' certification process; adding anti-evasion authority so the SEC can look at the totality of facts and circumstances, rather than being boxed in by a technical loophole; cutting the annual fundraising cap from $75 million to $50 million, with a hard $200 million lifetime limit; barring felons convicted of fraud or money laundering from using this framework at all; and tightening the related persons resale restrictions from a 5-percent ownership threshold down to a 3-percent so insiders can't quietly dump tokens on the public.

We also built three entirely new titles at the Democrats' request. We added 23 additional sections combating illicit finance, including determining when a decentralized finance platform is really decentralized or whether it is just decentralized in name only, and when they are subject to the securities laws and Bank Secrecy Act requirements; sanctions compliance for DeFi platforms; new sanctions authority that can be used to target crypto platforms that facilitate money laundering to Russia, Iran, and North Korea; $150 million in new FinCEN funding and mandatory Treasury and GAO studies on mixers, foreign adversary activity, and financial stability risk; Federal protections for digital asset ATMs, consumer disclosures, Federal Trade Commission authority, and a joint SEC-CFTC financial literacy mandate.

Democrats also got more than 30 wins in the agriculture division of this bill, the CFTC portion, including a private right of action for consumer protection violations; capturing meme coins in the CFTC's jurisdiction; a stronger ''conflict of interest'' rulemaking than the House-passed bill; exchange-based consumer protection disclosures; best execution rulemaking; anti-manipulation and credit rulemakings; $150 million in CFTC appropriations; a new office of the retail digital commodity advocate; and requirements for digital commodity exchanges to recruit culturally diverse boards of directors.

This isn't a courtesy list. Every single one of those items was something my colleagues across the aisle insisted on and something Republicans agreed to because a partisan bill doesn't survive the next election, the next administration, or the next market turndown. We put what is best for American innovation ahead of politics. I am simply asking my Democratic colleagues to do the same.

Nowhere are our concessions more apparent than on ethics. When my Democratic colleagues brought their concerns to me, I didn't ignore them. In fact, I took them straight to the President, and as a sign of good faith and commitment to American innovation, President Trump voluntarily delivered the strongest set of ethics provisions in U.S. history. I put my own relationship with President Trump on the line—so did BERNIE MORENO—to get a deal on ethics, and he agreed to it. No court, regulator, or statute compelled him to accept or offer any of this. He agreed to it because he believes so strongly that America, more than any other country, should be the one leading the way on digital asset innovation.

We are talking about a first-of-its-kind ban on any covered individual—the President, Vice President, every Member of Congress, every Federal judge, and their spouses issuing or sponsoring a digital asset for consideration.

He is willing to put his existing digital assets in a blind trust or to divest himself of them entirely under established ethics procedures. No sitting President has ever been asked to do such a thing, but President Trump will do it.

The Attorney General is directed to bring civil enforcement actions against any covered individual who knowingly and willfully violates the ban. Digital asset exchanges face civil penalties of up to $250,000 per violation per day.

Violating officials must disgorge every dollar of profit and pay a penalty of up to 10 percent of what they receive or $500,000, whichever is greater.

That is what my Democrat friends asked for, and that is what the President gave you. President Trump said yes to a standard no one else on Earth could have forced on him, and I still hear that it is not enough. If you give a mouse a cookie—children's literature informs us—he will ask for a glass of milk, too, but we have now given our Democrat friends the entire cookie, factory, and a tanker-load of milk.

I want to be very direct with this Chamber because I am done being careful about this. I have spent my entire term working on this, and for the last 11 months, I have been stuck in windowless rooms with my friends on the other side of the aisle who have told me, over and over, that ethics would be the sticking point; that if the President put his holdings in a blind trust and if he were to accept enforcement and penalties and disclosures, that would be the signal my colleagues needed.

We got it.

Senator MORENO and I were elated. We were amazed that the President would accept this.

But it is not yet enough.

I didn't come here today to accuse anyone of acting in bad faith. I believe my friends on the other side of the aisle are acting in good faith. I came here to simply ask: What specifically is left to give that is reasonable? Tell me the section number, because you have over 100 significant wins in the base text and an ethics agreement that has more teeth than George Washington had, with no precedent in American history.

My friends, at some point, continuing to say ''not yet'' isn't cautious; it is a deliberate decision to run out the clock and kill a bill, rather than risk a ''no'' vote on the record, with constituents and industry to answer to.

I have more to say. I am going to say it. I am going to say it before we get a vote on this bill—just not today.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE THAT GHISLAINE MAXWELL SHOULD NOT BE GRANTED A PRESIDENTIAL PARDON OR ANY FORM OF CLEMENCY FOR HER CRIMES WITH JEFFREY EPSTEIN RELATING TO THE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE OF MINORS

Ms. ROSEN. Mr. President, tomorrow, the Judiciary Committee will vote on Todd Blanche's nomination for Attorney General.

There are a number of reasons the members of the committee should oppose Todd Blanche's nomination—from his willingness to enable Donald Trump's worst instinct to his role in helping to create Trump's corrupt slush fund to pay out to January 6 rioters who assaulted police officers here in this Chamber and others. Yet there is one reason that stands out far ahead of the others—that of his complete and total mishandling of the Jeffrey Epstein and Ghislaine Maxwell case.

Former Trump Attorney General Pam Bondi told the House behind closed doors that Todd Blanche, as her Deputy, was responsible for how the Department handled the Epstein files. Under his supervision, the Department of Justice promised the release of Epstein's client list, claiming there was a list they compiled for Pam Bondi and sent to Pam Bondi, only to backtrack and refuse to release the document for months.

It took Congress passing an overwhelmingly bipartisan, veto-proof Federal law to force the release of these materials. Even then—even then—the Trump administration and specifically the Department of Justice, under Todd Blanche's management, delayed their compliance with this law.

When files were finally released, the identity of many perpetrators—not victims—were redacted, raising serious questions and concerns about who the administration was trying to protect. They redacted perpetrators, not victims.

As the White House and Justice Department tried to manage the fallout from mishandling this case, Todd Blanche was purportedly in the Situation Room with senior Trump administration officials working on a public relations strategy—well, on behalf of the President.

According to the New York Times, one of the options was to have a Justice Department lawyer interview Ghislaine Maxwell in order to get her to clear Donald Trump. Well, Todd Blanche apparently offered himself up to interview Ghislaine Maxwell and strangely raised the possibility that Maxwell's lawyer ''might expect something in return for her candor,'' according to the Times. A convicted sex trafficker wishes something in return from the President of the United States.

White House Counsel then laid out the possibility that Ghislaine Maxwell might be pardoned or have her sentence reduced. You heard that right. There literally was a serious discussion at the White House to pardon or reduce the sentence of Ghislaine Maxwell just in order to get her to say nice things about Donald Trump. And mind you, this is the same woman—the same woman—who facilitated Jeffrey Epstein's horrific abuse of underage girls over many years, year after year, hundreds of young women.

Our justice system worked as it was supposed to. Maxwell was found guilty by a jury of her peers. She was sentenced to 20 years in prison for her crimes. That is why it was odd when Todd Blanche, in a highly unusual step, personally interviewed Maxwell. And days later, she was—whoop—magically, magically transferred to a minimum security prison. Imagine that.

That is not the only thing that is odd. Ghislaine Maxwell's attorney, who Todd Blanche calls a friend, said that Maxwell wanted a pardon from Trump in exchange for her public testimony that would help Donald Trump. At the same time, Trump has refused to rule out—refused to rule out—pardoning her.

Trump has said:

> I'm allowed to do it.

He has even gone as far as saying:

> I'll take a look at it. I'll speak to the DOJ.

This is our President. The President said he would speak to the DOJ, which would now be led by his former lawyer Todd Blanche.

It is frankly horrifying that Trump would entertain the idea of clemency for even a second—even a second—for a convicted sex trafficker. That alone should be enough for the Senate to speak up with one voice and affirm that there should be absolutely no pardon for Ghislaine Maxwell—not now, not ever. That is why, earlier this year, I introduced a resolution doing just that. But given that Senate Republicans are poised to soon confirm Todd Blanche to lead the Department of Justice, the time to bring this resolution is now.

Earlier this month, the Senate passed a similar resolution saying there should be no Presidential pardon for Sam Bankman-Fried, so we have already set that precedent here in this Chamber. So let us now send a message to the White House and the Department of Justice right now that there should be no pardon for Ghislaine Maxwell. There should never be a pardon for someone who helped a monster—a monster—abuse underage girls for years. That is why I am requesting that we pass my commonsense resolution today saying just that.

Mr. President, notwithstanding rule XXII, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration and the Senate now proceed to S. Res. 608.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

> A resolution (S. Res. 608) expressing the sense of the Senate that Ghislaine Maxwell should not be granted a Presidential pardon or any form of clemency for her crimes with Jeffrey Epstein relating to the sexual exploitation and abuse of minors.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Ms. ROSEN. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 608) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of February 12, 2026, under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Ms. ROSEN. Mr. President, I am so pleased that we could find unanimous agreement on a resolution against a pardon for Ghislaine Maxwell. If Republicans advance Todd Blanche's nomination tomorrow in the Judiciary Committee, this is the least they can do to make their opposition to a Maxwell pardon clear.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative senior proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

REMEMBERING LINDSEY GRAHAM

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise this afternoon to pay tribute to an outstanding U.S. Senator and a dear friend, Senator Lindsey Graham.

When my husband first woke me with the news that Lindsey had died the night before, I couldn't believe it. I said to him: That can't possibly be true. I thought it was some tasteless internet hoax or a false report. Not Lindsey. Not our Lindsey. But sadly, it was true, although I still find it so hard to accept. I can only imagine how difficult this unexpected loss must be for his beloved sister DARLINE and the other members of his family.

Often when we think of a Senator, we ask: Did he or she make a difference? Did he or she have an impact on events here at home or abroad? Was the person a consequential Senator?

With Lindsey, the answer clearly was the resounding yes. Lindsey was a leader not only in national policy but also in shaping international events. How telling it is that the Prime Minister of Israel and the President of Ukraine both made the long voyage to attend his memorial service yesterday at the National Cathedral.

Whether he was leading a congressional trip to Israel in the wake of the